- Noches de Baile -

Overview

The Marlboro Noches de Baile '99 concluded its first pre-promotion activities on October 1, 1999. This exciting, new club promotion featuring an amateur dance competition will take place in 39 top nightclubs. The program is designed to reinforce the imagery of the Marlboro brand while increasing sales and traffic in those nightclubs in which the promotion takes place.

The program has been creatively designed to increase brand visibility among adult smokers and generate names of adult smokers for the Marlboro database.

Findings

Although the elements of the program and the clubs utilized afford high potential for a successful, exciting program, attention needs to be given to Cardenas/Fernandez's & Associates, Inc. (CF&A) inexperience and knowledge of the program. Understanding the fact that this is a new program guidance should be made available to CF&A that would equip them with the skills to manage an effective program.

- CF&A appears to be applying a "two team" approach versus a "team" approach in executing the program. For example, CF&A's Chicago staff usually has the final word concerning the program even when the Miami staff consistently displays a better understanding of the elements, execution and procedures of the program. It is my perception that this situation oftentimes creates friction between the Miami and Chicago staffs.

- Gene Dibble appears to be a very capable overseer of the program. Unfortunately, the time Gene spends in New York on other programs, does not allow him the time required to focus on a program the magnitude Noches de Baile.

- Printed matter supporting the program including the guidebook, contacts list was not researched or edited thoroughly enough to ensure they were free of typos and inaccurate information. I recommend that CF&A designate more time towards printed materials to ensure that anything associated with the Marlboro brand be of the highest caliber possible before distribution.

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- Since Noches de Baile is a new program with numerous elements, I strongly recommend that CF&A recruit and hire a professional with some knowledge of the Master Settlement Agreement and has experience in administering quality control techniques in order to contribute to the overall effectiveness of the program.

- Some attention should be given to ways to increase the number of contestants who sign up for the competition. I feel the program is only as good as the contestants and the main way to ensure quality is through attracting enough couples to compete. We should keep in mind that it is the norm for each market to have three or four "professional" amateur dancers. These "professional" amateurs are defined as those local amateur dancers who show up at every dance contest of any significance. It is this group that can take away the excitement element of a program because they are too familiar and predictable to the contest since the locals have seen them win many times. In sum, a high priority should be given to motivating other, unknown dancers to participate in this exciting program.

  With this in mind, maybe we should revisit three-dance requirement versus a one-dance requirement. In other words, an average club goer may not be proficient enough (with a partner) to be able to perform three required dances. One, perhaps, two, maybe, but three unlikely, unless they are the so-called "professional" amateur who could "kill" this promotion with their predictability.

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